

Boston, Sept. 23, 1837.

Dear bro. George:

66 Next to a glance at the face of an absent friend, is the sight of his handwriting — and therefore I was made happy by your letter of the 20th inst. Doubly happy indeed, because dear Anna very kindly occupied a portion of it with her neat chirography.

With regard to our meeting at Worcester on Wednesday next, I cannot urge upon you to attend it, if it will interfere materially with your business. But the crisis is ~~so~~ momentous one, and perhaps ~~we~~ ^{we have} never needed a stronger expression of feeling and sentiment from the thorough-going friends of our cause, than at the present time. I hope, therefore, that you will contrive, by hook or by crook, to be at Worcester; for the meeting cannot now avoid a discussion upon the "Appeal," and its decision will be looked for with great anxiety all over the land. The condemnation ought to be explicit — it ought to be strong — it ought to be decisive. Especially in view of the criminal and extraordinary course pursued by the Executive Committee and Emancipator at New-York. Be assured, we have too much sectarianism at head-quarters. There appears to be "something rotten in the State of Denmark." I am troubled exceedingly in spirit at what I am constrained to consider the blind, temporizing policy which the Board at New-York seem determined to pursue. Only look at it! — Five clergymen, professing to be conspicuous abolitionists, make a public appeal, in which they bring severe and vital charges, not merely against the Liberator, but abolitionists and their cause. Another appeal, backing this up, but still more grave and general in its charges, is issued at Andover, signed by thirty-nine professed friends. Then follows a letter from J. T. Woodbury, one of the "seventy agents." All these are copied exultingly into various religious and political pro-slavery newspapers, and our enemies are rejoicing in the assertion of Fitch and Turner, that nine-tenths of the abolitionists in New-England agree with them in opinion. The Friend of Man, the Herald of Freedom, the Vermont Telegraph, and various anti-slavery societies, have deemed the whole affair as worthy of special notice — not, in view of all these things, our friends in New-York have preserved unbroken silence! Will not our enemies quote the old adage — "Silence

gives consent," and claim the Emancipator as privately favouring the Appeal? Our friends at New-York may rely upon it, that the course which they have resolved to pursue, respecting this matter, will very ^{much} displease the great body of abolitionists, and alienate them and their money from the Parent Society.

In order that you may know something of the feelings at headquarters, I make a few extracts from a letter which I have received from Eliza Wright, Jr. - a letter, the tone and temper of which are so unlike himself, that you will find it difficult to believe that he wrote it. He says -

"I could have wished, yes, I have wished, from the bottom of my soul, that you could conduct that dear paper, the Liberator, in the singleness of purpose of its first years, without travelling off from the ground of our true, noble, heart-stirring Declaration of Sentiments - without broaching sentiments which are novel and shocking to the community, and which seem to me to have no logical sequence from the principles on which we are associated as abolitionists. I cannot but regard the taking hold of one great moral enterprise, while another is in hand and but half achieved, as an outrage upon common sense, somewhat like that of the dog crossing the river with his meat. But you have seen fit to introduce to the public some novel views - I refer especially to your sentiments on government and religious perfection, and they have produced the effect which was to have been expected. And now, considering what stuff human nature is made of, is it to be wondered at, that some honest-hearted thorough-going abolitionists should have lost their equanimity? As you well know, I am comparatively no bigot to any creed, political or theological; yet, to tell the plain truth, I look upon your notions of government and religious perfection as downright fanaticism - as harmless as they are absurd. I would not care a pin's head, if they were preached to all Christendom; for it is not in the human mind, (except in a peculiar, and, as I think, diseased state,) to believe them. * * My heart sickens over your letter to Woodbury. I feel that it does injustice to him. Grant that his publication was ill-natured, coarse, and acrimonious: there was still some reason - to his mind, very strong reason for it. You meet him in a way which my whole soul tells me is sinful. You exalt yourself too much. I pray to God that you may be brought to repent of it, as repent you must, unless my moral vision is woefully bleared. I am as confident as of my existence, that a few more such letters would open a bottomless gulf of distrust between you and ~~them~~ ^{the abolitionists}. Let the Sabbath, and the theoretic theology of the priesthood, alone for the present, and with my good will, you may grind every one of them to powder, who brings his property to sustain the slaveholder. Let the government alone, till, such as it is, all are equally protected by it, and after that you may work your will upon it, for all me. But if all this cannot be done, why, come out plainly, and say you have left the

old track, and we started on a new one - or, rather, two or three new ones, at once, and save us from the miserable business of making disclaimers. I cannot but regard the Boston controversy as wrong, wrong, wrong, on both sides. If strict military justice were done, I am thinking both parties would be cashiered!"

If our dear bro. E. Wright can scribble in the foregoing strain, what have we to expect from other members of the Executive Committee? - I have a letter from Lewis Tappan, in which he says -

"I deeply regretted seeing the Clerical Appeal; but after its publication, my own judgment would have been in favor of a short, well-tempered, dignified, Christ-like reply" - [thus insinuating that neither brother Phelps nor myself have exhibited any of these qualities!] - "Your reply to Woodbury pained me exceedingly. It was beneath you in very many respects. Without enlarging, I consider the whole proceedings most unwise and hurtful. The Executive Committee determined on maintaining silence, at least for the present, and they approve the course pursued by the editor of the Emancipator. They will not be deterred from what they deem their duty. They neither approve of the Appeal, nor of the replies, but lament the whole. * * Candor induces me to say, that, in my judgment, objectionable things have appeared in the Liberator, and they have been discussed, at times, with an appearance of acrimony. Questions have been mooted that had better not have been discussed, and language has sometimes been used not in accordance with the ~~gospel~~ lowly spirit of the gospel. * * May the Lord preserve you and bless you, and give you the sweet temper of John united to the intrepidity and ardor of Paul!"

I might make other extracts, but these must suffice. Have we not reason to feel disquieted at the New-York policy? If persisted in, will it not inevitably divide the anti-slavery ranks? In the next Liberator, I shall feel it to be an imperative duty to rebuke the Ex. Committee and the Emancipator before the public.

How much, then, is depending upon the meeting of our State Society at Worcester! Whatever it does, will tell mightily for good or evil. Whether Fitch and Woodbury will try to rally their forces on that occasion, I do not know, but think it highly probable. Should you attend, let your soul speak out as God shall give it utterance - and think not of me as your brother-in-law, but only of our glorious cause. You are, happily, too well known to be charged with being swayed or biased by our connexions. Bro. May and Phelps will be there - the Grimké - Alvan Stewart and perhaps Gerrit Smith, and many others. The meeting will probably ~~hold~~ hold two days, but perhaps only one. From Worcester, bro. May will go with his family to Brooklyn. The course of reasoning, marked out in your letter, to be given at Worcester, is very good and conclusive. I have not time or room

to suggest any points. ~~As~~ As I shall not go to Worcester myself, perhaps I may find time to send you a few suggestions by bro. Phelps.

Eliza and myself had a very delightful visit at bro. May's, in South Scituate, and attended two anti-slavery meetings. Mr. Davis and E. J. Chace have just paid us a visit, and returned yesterday to Providence. We are all well. Blessing and joy and peace be with you all in Brooklyn.

Ever yours,

Wm. Lloyd Garrison.

P.S. Our abolition friends in Vermont are not strongly, in the Providence Telegraph, against the Clerical Appeal. Good!

Singlas.

W. Benson,

George

Brooklyn,

Connecticut.

P.S. I have paid Dr. Harrington \$2.00 for his Anti-septic, but he carried ^{it} with him to Southbridge — he promises to send it to you by the way of Thompson in the course of a week. Says he shall sell his farm in a few weeks — is very anxious that you should buy it. He had no plaster on hand when I called to see, but was going to spread some in a day or two. You shall have a strip soon.